

ISSUES DISCUSSION PAPERS

MAIN TOPIC: HAVING AN ISSUE-ORIENTED CONFERENCE

Note: *The following five papers address the main discussion topic for this year's conference: the importance, and the process, of using the World Service Conference as a forum for the discussion of issues affecting the growth and welfare of Narcotics Anonymous worldwide. We encourage NA communities to discuss these papers and share their WSC representatives their conscience concerning the subjects addressed.*

Interim Committee

THE PROCESS OF ISSUES DISCUSSION: ITS IMPORTANCE

Note: *The following paper presents the views of the author and/or the author's region. The views it presents are not necessarily those of the World Service Conference or any other element of NA's world services, nor does this paper speak for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

Complete discussion of issues is critical to positive decisions. Actually, complete discussion of the issues should take place before motions are even developed. All too often we, as a fellowship, put the cart before the horse and try to develop solutions before we have adequately identified the problem. This is understandable, since we are dealing with the problem of addiction which is quite literally a matter of life and death. People are out there using and dying every day. We seem to be working with a sense of impending doom and have an automatic feeling that everything is a crisis. This is an illusion, but it is difficult to escape. This false sense of urgency encourages us to make hurried decisions that create more problems that we need to hurry up and solve because, after all, there are addicts out there who are dying. It is a never-ending cycle that does not let us stop and plan.

A perfect example of this behavior happened at WSC'93 in Van Nuys. In the heat of the fallout after our chairperson admitted to misappropriation of funds and subsequently resigned, we called for the resignation of a trustee for similar, but not identical, behavior. We then, almost immediately, wrote a bad policy on the floor of the conference relating to fellowship credit card use. The result was the loss of another trustee the following year, his reputation tainted, a lot of hurt feelings, a petition on the Atlanta conference floor for redress of a personal grievance, and clarification by the Interim Committee of a grave

misunderstanding. The situation was awful, yet inevitable, because of a policy made in the heat of the moment instead of with proper deliberation.

The subject of issues discussion has many facets, and there is certainly not enough time to thoroughly discuss it in a two-page paper. I would like to share some of the thoughts that my associates in service and I have been kicking around since WSC'94 in Atlanta.

Why we want to make quick decisions:

- As addicts we want immediate gratification.
- It gives us a sense of accomplishment to "solve" problems.
- We're afraid that if the problem lingers, it will get worse.
- We're afraid that if we don't solve it now, something bad will happen.
- We just don't want to spend the time to look at all aspects of the issue.
- We're not sure what all the issues are.
- We can provide an immediate response and be done with it.
- If we take care of it now, we can move on to more important issues.
- A small group of people are sure that they know what "the answer" is.
- We're tired of "beating the issue into the ground."
- It's easier.

Why we want to slow down:

- Bad decisions tend to create more problems.
- When we act hurriedly, we tend to make a higher percentage of errors.
- If we thoroughly discuss the issues, the problem becomes more clear.
- With a clear problem definition, possible solutions become more evident.
- When we act deliberately, we can better ensure that our solutions fit into our overall purpose.
- Planning tends to move us forward, while crisis management tends to keep us stuck in the problem.
- When we thoroughly examine the issues surrounding a problem, we sometimes find that it isn't a problem after all; instead, it is simply the natural course of things.

The most frequent complaint that I have heard from addicts who have been in the service structure for a long while is that we seem to repeat ourselves incessantly. This is not the same thing as thorough discussion of the problems. However, the annoyance of repetitive point-making while discussing things tends to make us impatient. This impatience has been a factor in the creation of the quagmire we call our service structure. In the absence of any overall plan we have charged forward, solving problems without realizing how they relate to each other or to the process of service as a whole. Three spiritual principles are indispensable: honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. In service, patience and tolerance sometimes need to come before even these.

We must do everything we can to encourage full discussion of the issues. That doesn't mean making sure that I personally speak on every issue; more often than not, it means me listening to others speak on the issues. When I listen closely, I frequently find that the speaker is not repeating a point already made; instead, a subtly different and sometimes significant perspective is being presented.

Individually, it is my responsibility to encourage those who tend not to go to the microphone. It's the shy individuals who sometimes have the perspective that we need to hear. I personally don't need encouragement. I think that everyone is entitled to my opinion, but when I am paying attention to my Higher Power I usually hear, "Be still. Listen."

As a fellowship, I believe that we need to encourage our leadership and support them in developing a process structure that encourages the open and thorough discussion of issues. The structure of the 1995 *Conference Agenda Report* is an excellent step in this direction. Just think of it: Our leadership has listened to us, synthesized the major issues that came out of WSC'94, and asked us for our input on them and any other issue. We are sharing in writing our thoughts on the issues that we, as individuals and regions, find important. Maybe by the time we get to the conference some of the redundancy will be eliminated.

I, for one, am hopeful. I believe that if we are patient and tolerant with each other, if we relax and listen to each other, all will be well. We'll plan and grow, and the message of recovery will reach many suffering addicts.

Jeff Spencer, RSR, Minnesota Region

CAR MOTIONS, VOTING, AND ISSUES DISCUSSION

Note: *The following paper presents the views of the author and/or the author's region. The views it presents are not necessarily those of the World Service Conference or any other element of NA's world services, nor does this paper speak for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

I am writing this at the request and direction of my region. I have been traveling around to groups and ASC meetings for the past two years, attempting to establish an objective line of two-way communication between world services and the 453 NA groups I represent.

As we move toward some major changes in the way we deal with the issues facing our fellowship, I would like to offer some input and attempt to express the voice of my region concerning Chesapeake and Potomac's committed motion (Issue #2, WSC'94 Motion #44) and the main topic.

First, let's look at the most commonly voiced objections to "business as usual." Groups want to be involved but vote on motions in the *CAR* which will

most likely be amended, substituted, etc. Also, they can expect the twenty-five to thirty motions in the *CAR* to come back as one hundred-plus. This has caused the groups to become frustrated and distrustful. They no longer feel a part of the process. The following suggestion has been received with excitement and has renewed enthusiasm for participation in the process.

Proposed new procedure for the WSC (not an original idea):

1. Vote on all business on the first day of the conference or commit it to issue discussion.
2. Spend the remainder of the conference, except for elections and budget sessions, on issue discussion in developing next year's *CAR* into the form of basic motions (twenty maximum) from the top discussion issues.
3. Take *CAR* home to allow much more time (seven to eight months) for discussion in groups, areas, regions, and forums.
4. The November/December cut-off date for motions, strictly enforced, would now be for amendments, substitute motions, etc.
5. The *CAR*, now after cut off, is printed, translated, and distributed as non-amendable.
6. Open up the March *Conference Report* for pros, cons, and discussion.
7. The *CAR* would be voted on the first day of the following WSC.

Most of the advantages of this procedure are easily recognized. Groups could feel confident that they are voting on actual business and are truly a part of the process. Also, regions unable to send a delegate to the conference could still vote by mail or fax. This would help Concepts Two, Seven, Nine, and Twelve to become a reality and bring our Second and Ninth Traditions back in line with the way we actually operate.

It appears that the lines of delegated authority continue to become more centralized. Talk of a "unified" or "superboard" are just the latest if not the most serious examples. Decisions are being made by world service leadership, in my opinion, without adequate time for discussion by conference participants. Let me cite an example: "As you can see, we have not presented a list of priorities or an endless amount of detail but more an overview of what we believe is workable and in keeping with what we have heard here. The Interim Committee is asking the conference to allow us to have the flexibility to make the necessary decisions to plan the work of world services." (From Interim Committee proposed budget WSC'94 , paragraph 2.)

Who has given the Interim Committee the authority to change procedure voted into being by the WSC? Motion #25 from WSC'93 clearly stated, "The WSC treasurer shall present at the annual meeting a list of possible priority and discretionary expenditures which shall be ranked by the WSC participants. This list should be designed in a clear, precise fashion so that it can be followed." Where was our priority list? The submitted proposed budget stated that, "The

spending plan is based on the premise that only issues will be presented in the 1995 CAR." Should the Interim Committee have the authority to suggest a change to WSC procedure without conference participants having time to discuss this thoroughly with their regions, committees, or boards? The Interim Committee's own guidelines state, "Further, the Interim Committee shall make necessary decisions affecting NA world services when the World Service Conference is not in session, mindful of priorities previously established by the World Service Conference." (TWGSS)

The WSC is the "single point of decision and accountability" when it comes to its own procedure. The Fifth Concept says, "When we decide a certain task should be done and clearly say which trusted servant, service board, or committee has the authority to accomplish the task, we avoid unnecessary confusion. . . . We do well when we clearly specify to whom authority is being given for each service responsibility. . . . We want to have the opportunity to impact those decisions, especially if they directly affect us. . . . The Fifth Concept helps us responsibly delegate our authority for NA services. In exercising the Fifth Concept, we make a simple, straightforward contract with our trusted servants. Right from the start, they know what we are asking of them, what decisions they are expected to make themselves, and to what degree we will hold them accountable for the service work they do on our behalf. *Exercise of Concept Five is not a task to be taken lightly.* [Italics mine.] It calls for us to carefully consider the service work we want done; to clearly designate who should do that work; to delegate the authority to do it; and to maintain accountability for those duties. It takes effort to conscientiously apply Concept Five, but the results are worth the effort."

Let's be frank and honest. We can discuss issues and spiritual principles for as long as we like, but decisions will be made. It's up to us, as NA group members, to decide who makes these decisions and when they will be made. If they are made by a small group of individuals, however good-willed and spiritual they may be, without direct input from the fellowship in the form of voting or *verified* consensus, then I submit to you we are disguising government, not service. Concept Twelve says, "NA service is the cooperative effort of trusted servants receiving guidance from the groups, not a rule enforced by a governing body. . . . All the elements depend on all the others for their effectiveness; when any one element attempts to act as an agency of government, rather than a vehicle for service, it strains the ties that bind us together. . . . The nongoverning nature of our service structure dictates that we seek others' advice in our own decisions, their consent in decisions affecting them, and their cooperation in decisions affecting us all. . . . The kind of authority that our groups have delegated to our boards and committees is the authority to serve, not to govern."

I don't doubt that world services leadership, especially the Interim Committee and the WSC Administrative Committee, have their hearts in the right places and

truly believe that they are responding to what they perceive to be the needs of the fellowship. I submit that the responsibility for pointing us, the fellowship, in the right direction resides with the WSB, and cite the following as support: "The responsibility of the World Service Board of Trustees is to provide guidance and direction. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to the following: Development and recommendation of policies for NA which will help the fellowship achieve its primary purpose. Participation in development of the priorities and focus of world services. Assistance in determining the direction of the World Service Office. Participation in the development and review of world service budgets." (TWGSS)

Further, as opinion, I submit that the Interim & Administrative Committees are currently working as a "mini-superboard," as evidenced by the fact that Interim is now responsible for the CAR (Interim Committee report dated 28 September 1994). Also, the \$17,380 approved during a heated budget session this year for a world services meeting was more than doubled to \$35,600 without conference approval. Of even more concern is the totally new spending category, "Single Project Expenses," which was not presented at the WSC. As of 7 October 1994, \$9,648.07 had been spent and \$29,394 allocated to that project. Was this a "necessary decision"? What was the emergency?

The World Service Board of Trustees has a totally separate purpose from the WSC Administrative Committee and the WSO Board of Directors. It's no accident that it requires a two-thirds vote to be a trustee. Maybe the Interim Committee should be abolished and these responsibilities given to the WSB. Four voting members of Interim require a simple majority to be elected. Furthermore, only two of these members are elected to Interim by the WSC. If we keep Interim, I strongly suggest we look more closely at restructuring this committee to include a significant number of voting members not serving on another board or committee who are directly elected by and accountable to the WSC. (Motion 47, WSC '94/Other Issue Discussion Topic #3) We have an untapped wealth of human resources. I call your attention to Danette B's letter in the WSC'94 draft minutes. I will quote but one paragraph in a letter I would encourage everyone to read in its entirety: "We have an incredible wealth of NA members who have served at a world level, who have a vast amount of experience, talent, and ability but are rarely, if ever, called upon to serve once they are no longer in elected positions. I believe that part of the reason for this is the closed system which we perpetuate. A system which says there is only a finite amount of money and time and if we try to include too many other people there won't be enough for us. A different perspective would be that if we utilize the vast resources available, there would not be as much need for the money and time and energy of a select few."

In closing, I'd like to point out that it *is* our fellowship. One rendition of the WSC's purpose, as stated in *A Temporary Working Guide to the Service*

Structure, is "to be supportive of the fellowship as a whole, and to define and take action according to the group conscience of Narcotics Anonymous." (*TWGSS*, pg. 1) Decisions need to be made, some of which may be extremely painful. If we as NA members at the group, area, and regional level don't make them, someone or some committee or board, super or otherwise, will. If this is what we want, then let's officially delegate these responsibilities to the appropriate service body. If not, then let's make some decisions. The time for rumoring, politics, territorial disputes, and complaining is long since past. Let's get on with it!

Pete Mohr, Chairperson, Chesapeake and Potomac RSC

AN ISSUE-ORIENTED AGENDA

Note: *The following paper presents the views of the author and/or the author's region. The views it presents are not necessarily those of the World Service Conference or any other element of NA's world services, nor does this paper speak for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

We take this project to be as important as any we have undertaken. To be asked to give direction to our conference and its leadership on how the WSC will be structured for the future allows us to be active in shaping the tone of what we do in service at that level. How we do that will affect how appealing serving at that level will become to a majority of our fellowship.

The Northern New England Region has come to a consensus that, firstly, an issue-oriented conference would best serve the addicts, groups, areas, coöps, and regions. Secondly, the WSC discussion, like ours, can be on service-related issues or recovery-oriented fellowship issues. All concerns are treated equally. It could be said that all issues are related to service to the addict who still suffers, so it makes sense that all topics are service-related. The leadership, as is our experience, should only facilitate discussion.

Also our experience is that it works very well on our regional level. Very seldom does our RSC have more than three or four motions. Most issues come from the areas, the coöp, or the regional trusted servants; occasionally they arise from information passed up from the WSC, the WSO, or other regions, including our Northeast Zonal Forum, which is entirely discussion-oriented. We value group conscience very highly, and most issues do not need a formal vote. Those that do are only asked for votes in the affirmative. We realize that those of you who have committees where all issues are decided by formal votes (fifty percent plus one, etc.) may think this highly idealistic, but discussion, affirmation, and concern for the minority voice have been found to work very spiritually on a vast majority of issues. We encourage all to try it. We love to share our experience, strength, and hope.

As for the solutions: Could we have other discussion forums? To this end, we have expanded our annual multiregional service learning day in March 1995 to seventeen invited participants, plus a funded and/or unfunded request for world-level participation in a three-day multiregional learning event. This is a forum where the topics are set by the regions that participate; discussion, shared experience, and solutions are sought.

Could we delegate more responsibility to the regions, and conversely less to all branches of world service? One idea is that we could poll the fellowship, choosing issues on a priority basis. We could take action on ones that receive a conscience (that is, more than two-thirds) vote. We would take ample time to collate this information, send out a list to the regions, and plan the WSC from the response.

Our regional leadership highly values the minority opinion, as stated in Concept Nine. One of these was that the zones need to have more responsibility; another was that we need to reduce the number of voting participants at the world conference.

We do have concerns. How do we as a fellowship change the way we are used to voting on projects such as literature and guidelines? Is the issue forum we have used at the last three WSCs enough? Could it be expanded? How do we find time and energy to fully discuss all issues?

Northern New England RSC

IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES DISCUSSION

Note: *The following paper presents the views of the author. Those views are not necessarily those of the World Service Conference or any other element of NA's world services, nor does this paper speak for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

I believe that with full exploration of an issue we have the opportunity to gain clarity prior to making a decision on a matter. Oftentimes, I have watched as the conference reacted to a motion and/or personality. These reactions appear to be fear-based, and I wonder what has us alarmed and why we have an urgent need to take care of business. The more views, I believe, expressed on an issue offer several perspectives to consider prior to a decision. When we operate with immediacy in decision making, refuting the need to explore all possible avenues, spiritual principles tend to be absent.

Our principles appear nonexistent as the pace becomes frantic at the conference, like with our budget session and amendment mania. My attempts with tracking this frenzied activity leave my head feeling like a ping pong ball working its way through a maze, and those mental gymnastics produce exhaustion. The flurry of movement seems to imply agendas and a desire to

control outcomes. These actions appear to conflict with spiritual principles. There is no unity; powerlessness, acceptance, and surrender are forgotten. The time needed to seek guidance from a Higher Power is invalidated with reaction. I believe change will begin if we become willing to view issue discussion as needed (a must).

Perhaps the ability to communicate with each other in the world services arena is foreign. We have become accustomed to an anticipated protocol. This protocol, in my mind, is comfortable, familiar, and miserable pain. What is a familiar action that some experienced members conveniently utilize that produces a groan from other members and needs no dialogue? "Call the question." When the conference enters that mindset, how informed is our decision? How much discussion did we entertain on the issue? I don't believe many of our decisions truly consider NA as a whole and how the action we've taken will help promote unity. I believe the immediacy may dissipate and the discussion increase if each and every conference participant asked themselves two questions: How will this decision help our fellowship worldwide? And how will this action foster unity?

I believe we need to remain open-minded as viewpoints expressed may be radically different from our own. We need to honestly consider each position that is presented in the context of NA as a whole. We need to be willing to surrender personal and regional points of view for unity. I believe each and every member at the conference loves NA as much as I do, and I realize that our perceptions of an issue vary with our experiences. I also believe that each and every one of us owes it to ourselves and to the addicts here and yet to come to take the time to engage in discussion. We need to allow ourselves to be guided by a Higher Power, as a Higher Power has helped us stay clean and be of service during the conference. By using all our available spiritual resources, we will begin to recognize the value of discussion to help us better serve Narcotics Anonymous worldwide.

Jane Nickels, Chairperson, WSC Literature Committee

ISSUE DISCUSSIONS

Note: *The following paper presents the views of the author. Those views are not necessarily those of the World Service Conference or any other element of NA's world services, nor does this paper speak for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

Each one of us who participates in the annual World Service Conference has a responsibility to support the fellowship's primary purpose. We each have important ideas and thoughts to contribute regarding the fellowship and world services. Having had the opportunity of attending a few WSCs, I have been able

to witness our fellowship grow and mature each year. I believe that we are now at a point in which we can strive for a true group conscience through an issue-discussion format. If we can bring all of our thoughts and ideas together in an issue-discussion format, we have the ability to make WSC fulfill its stated purpose "to be supportive of the fellowship as a whole and to define and take action according to the group conscience of NA," rather than the bureaucratic monster it has been. Issue discussion allows the fellowship as a whole to pool its experience, thoughts, and beliefs concerning a topic or group of topics. Issue discussion provides an atmosphere for effective decision making. Finally, when all those participating in the discussion join together, a feeling of unity results.

The conference has traditionally relied upon majority voting to make decisions. Majority voting can be frustrating, because it does not facilitate careful analysis of alternatives. Majority voting almost always results in winners and losers. When conference participants are voting either for or against an issue, it provides a perfect opportunity for hallway lobbying and vote tallying. Utilization of an issue-discussion format allows participants to bring their spirituality and experience into the discussion. This format allows us to work slowly, considering all points of view, only then allowing a motion to evolve from those discussions. When each participant feels a part of the discussion, we each become a part of the solution.

Issue discussion is closely related to unity. Our experience has shown us that when we all have had the opportunity to discuss an issue, we feel better prepared to make decisions. Small discussions groups have worked well for us in the world service setting on many occasions. Decisions based on full discussion, with each member understanding and expressing his or her view on the matter, lead us to greater unanimity within the body. When the decision-making body has greater unanimity, we seem to have better compliance with our decisions. All members of the discussion, no matter if it occurs at the home-group level or at the conference, are considered equal. When everyone who chooses to is part of the discussion, greater fellowship unity results.

When the administrators of our services have had an opportunity to listen to our discussions, it becomes easier for them to carry out the task assigned to them: the administration of world services. They no longer need to make administrative decisions based on assumptions. They can make their decisions knowing that the fellowship has had an opportunity to discuss an issue fully.

It seems logical to conclude that the administrators of world services should decide what issues should be chosen for fellowshipwide discussion. I would encourage them to choose topics that are appropriate and related to our fellowship in the here-and-now. As our Basic Text tells us,

On a practical level, change occurs because what's appropriate to one phase of recovery may not be for another. We constantly let go of what has served its purpose and let God guide us through the current phase with what works here and now.

Issues chosen should be relevant to the climate of the fellowship. Choosing a theme for each conference year would allow the entire fellowship to focus on a single topic or related topics throughout the course of the year. Issues can be either service- or recovery-related. If we limit ourselves to discussing only service-related issues, we may be limiting the fellowship from issues which may be of great value.

NA service has always been a team effort. Members of the team include special workers, team leaders, and individual members. In our fellowship, we encourage the concept of equality among members: No one person is more or less important than the next. Every member of the NA service team has something of value to contribute, no matter how big or small. Leadership is no exception. Our leaders should have full participation rights in the discussion of issues, just as we would allow any other member of the service team to take part in discussions.

In conclusion, I believe we are now ready for fellowshipwide discussion of issues through the *Conference Agenda Report*. Issue discussion has many benefits which we should not overlook. It provides an atmosphere for effective decision making while encouraging each of us to become part of the solution. I believe the end result of issue discussion will be fellowshipwide unity. Issue discussion will ultimately encourage the WSC to fulfill its stated purpose: "To be supportive of the fellowship as a whole and to define and take action according to the group conscience of NA."

Susan Blaue, Chairperson, WSC Public Information Committee

OTHER DISCUSSION TOPICS

Note: *The following three papers address additional topics the authors, their regions, and/or their committees felt strongly about. The WSC'95 agenda does not currently provide for time to discuss these papers. However, the agenda does call for the WSC to come to an agreement at some point on a process for determining discussion topics to be addressed at future conferences.*

Interim Committee

LEADERSHIP

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Since the possibility of including reports in the *Conference Agenda Report* is extended to all conference participants, I wish to offer a few thoughts on the topic of leadership.

WSC leadership, as it defines itself, includes somewhere between all conference participants and the Interim Committee, depending on who is speaking and who is listening. There is no doubt that there should be leadership, but what exactly should leadership provide for the whole of world services?

As a representative of my region, I listen to the issues of concern to my constituents and act on their behalf. I try to resolve these issues with the lower (world) level of the NA service structure, but the world servants, which my region has helped elect, mostly talk about their own agenda and try to persuade me that theirs is the answer. My region does not wish to be told the answers. We want to participate in the resolution of problems, but our servants tell us how the problems should be resolved. Are these servants? We think not.

My experience with service has been with mediation, facilitation, problem-resolution, and compromise. We all have been able to come to a solution without being told how to come to the solution. It is distressing that world services tries so hard to control the process. We do not want to be told what is best for us or how things must be done.

Why does leadership manage us so? Why do the choices made by leadership earn so many questions? Perhaps because the management is unneeded and the choices are inappropriate?

Why is the WSC Outreach Ad Hoc Committee prevented from pursuing work on an outreach handbook? Administration has blocked progress due to lack of staff support, but outreach has not requested any staff assistance this year.

Administration has blocked progress to focus on this project, but the WSC overwhelmingly directed that outreach continue again this year.

Why is the process for resolution of the inventory project being developed before the final Composite Group report is released? After attending the quarterly in Van Nuys, hearing this question raised time after time, and observing it being ignored by "leadership," I must conclude that the folks we elected are not doing what we want them to do. They do not serve us. They serve themselves.

The audio tapes of the quarterly world services meeting in Van Nuys are clear: We want the Composite Group report before we continue. Instead, "leadership" has scheduled a meeting for March to complete its timetable for the resolution phase, when we have no way of knowing what the real needs of the resolution phase are without looking between the covers of the report. This is neither good planning nor good listening.

What can we do about this? I intend to ask my region to allow me to vote for world trusted servants who serve better and lead less. If necessary, we can vote for "none of the above," especially where a conference participant has a vote on the floor of the WSC. The personalities that lead us now must be removed; when they are, maybe the fellowship will be heard for a change.

Thank you for permitting my opinion to be heard.

Tim C, Alternate RSR, Region of the Virginians

ONLY RSRs SHOULD VOTE AT THE CONFERENCE

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In our region we are very aware that NA is growing and that change shall and must occur. Our question concerns the who's, how's, and why's of this change. We believe these changes should come from the fellowship and that any course of action should be directed by the fellowship as a whole. We believe that before we can adequately address what we do after the inventory, we may want to see what the inventory reveals. The issue presented below is intended to serve as part of our inventory process:

When I got clean, one of the first things my sponsor suggested I do was find a meeting I felt good at and make it my home group. It was explained to me that my voice counted and was necessary for the continued growth and well-being of our fellowship. My voice could be heard on issues affecting the fellowship in my home group through my vote in its group conscience. It was explained to me, and I have come to believe, that something spiritual happens when a group of

addicts meet together and come to a consensus on an issue. This does not mean all agree but that the group as a whole comes to a decision. Over time I have found myself on both the majority and minority sides of issues. At times I have left my home group's business meetings kicking and screaming, while at other times I've left with a sense of inner peace. I have experienced situations where I, as a trusted servant, have become so obsessed with a particular outcome that I forgot who I was there to serve and stopped trusting in the principles of our traditions. I believe that we, as a fellowship, need to make sure that we, as trusted servants, are careful not to fall into this trap. Looking back on these times, I have come to understand that a power greater than the group was at work and have come to trust this power and the spiritual principles behind our traditions. Our Second Tradition talks about this power and the principles involved. I have learned it works best for me when I am honest in stating my thoughts and feelings in whatever service meeting I am a part of. I try to keep in mind that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern, and to leave the outcome to what I now know is our one Ultimate Authority.

It was explained to me that our service structure resembled an inverted pyramid, with the groups at the top, then areas, then regions, and at the bottom world services. Since being presented with this explanation, I have seen the tendency to regard the service bodies beyond the group as above the group in levels of authority. I believe that some of us have lost the distinction our Ninth Tradition makes between the NA Fellowship and the service boards or committees we create that are directly responsible to those they serve, the groups. I believe that one reason for this has been our service structure increasing its own role and responsibilities, most notably at the world level. Some contributing factors to this are the differing understandings of the terms "group conscience" and "trusted servant" within our fellowship, most notably seen at the world level.

I believe these factors and our resultant state of affairs distracts us from our primary purpose, as some of us have become more interested in creating things to do and changes to make--self service, in other words--instead of simply following our traditions and trusting the fellowship, our Ultimate Authority.

We believe that our regional service representative and alternate are trusted to vote as they have been instructed, based on our regional group conscience concerning the items they were given advance notice of, and they are trusted to use their best judgment on other issues which may arise for which the region could not have obtained a group conscience, keeping in mind our primary purpose and traditions. The RSR and alternate RSR serve as representatives of our region, not for their personal benefit or representing some special interest.

Our region believes this best reflects the intent of our traditions and the spiritual system of the checks and balances in our service structure. We remember that service, by definition, means to help, aid, or assist, not to direct

or change. Therefore, our trusted servants should be of service and not assume the power to direct or change, as this is in conflict with the spiritual nature of service.

Our region supports the principle that only RSRs should have a vote at the WSC, for the following reasons:

1. Only those who represent the fellowship should vote on what impacts the fellowship.
2. The nature of service as explained above is to help, not direct.
3. Those who are trusted servants already have a vote at their home groups.
4. Giving a vote to anyone other than fellowship representatives cheapens the importance the "one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."
5. We all suffer from the disease of addiction and need all the guidance we can get.

Our inventory, like our recovery, is part of a process. I know that when I have pushed or rushed decisions, they have never given me the outcome that I expected. Fear of the unknown; or more probably the fear of not getting what I think is best, helps to drive this behavior. Given the issues facing our fellowship, it is our region's hope that discussion continues in these areas so that all are reminded of whom we serve. The reality of it all is that our Higher Power's will shall be expressed in spite of--or because of--our best efforts, and part of learning to trust in this is honestly sharing our individual, group, area, and regional feelings, thoughts, and ideas with each other in the loving spirit of service, trusting the outcome to our one Ultimate Authority.

Rik H, RSR, Region of the Virginians

DEVELOPMENT OF BOOK TWO OF THE BASIC TEXT

Note: *The following paper presents the views of the WSC Literature Committee. The views it presents are not necessarily those of the World Service Conference or any other element of NA's world services, nor does this paper speak for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

During the WSC Literature Committee's brief discussion of solicitation of personal stories from our members, the committee was informed by a member from outside the USA that the Quebec Region had recently formed an ad hoc subcommittee for the purpose of soliciting French-language personal stories. This member further elaborated on the possibility of several NA communities outside the USA pursuing similar action with their personal stories development.

The conference literature committee subsequently started to explore a number of options for further development of the personal recovery stories that comprise Book Two of the Basic Text. Three options identified were:

1. Book Two solely comprised of personal stories from members of the fellowship in the USA
2. Book Two featuring a collection of personal stories from a worldwide fellowship and translated into each respective language group. This option may warrant a free-standing Book Two and the possibility of a WSC Literature Committee ad hoc subcommittee whose membership would include participants from NA communities around the world, including members of the World Services Translation Committee.
3. Book Two composed from a worldwide collection of personal stories translated only into English for USA distribution and a supplement to the Basic Text.

The WSC Literature Committee is excited with Option #2. We see it as a method of embracing the "we" of our worldwide fellowship. Our committee desires feedback from conference participants. Do we desire a separate book that shares personal stories of recovery from our worldwide fellowship? Do we believe our members will identify with the experience, strength, and hope shared by personal stories from around the globe? Would the NA community in the USA best be served with personal stories solely its their own members? Do members elsewhere believe they would best be served by personal stories only from their own communities? Do members outside the USA view a collaborative book as a benefit to their recovery? How can we, as a worldwide fellowship, share our recovery with each other through literature?

The WSC Literature Committee hopes to learn the answers to these questions during discussion of Book Two at WSC'95. Prior to finalization of our development plan for Book Two of the Basic Text, we desire full exploration of all possibilities, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts at the conference.

WSC Literature Committee